



Student Health Services  
Cowell Student Health Center  
1156 High Street  
Santa Cruz, CA 95064

PH (831) 459-2211  
(831) 459-2869  
FAX (831) 459-3546

**Communicable Disease Incident: Single case of Chickenpox in UCSC student residing on campus.**

**Investigation Initiated:** November 22, 2011

IF YOU SUSPECT YOU HAVE CHICKENPOX DISEASE, NOTIFY YOUR DOCTOR'S OFFICE BEFORE GOING TO THE DOCTOR TO ARRANGE ALTERNATIVE ENTRANCE TO THE OFFICE AND MINIMIZE EXPOSURE TO OTHERS.

INCIDENT

- Student Health Center was notified on 11/22/11 of a possible chicken pox exposure at the UCSC Student Health Center by a student who resides on campus at Crown Apartments. The student has been attending class up until the 17<sup>th</sup> of November and students, staff and faculty who were in those class rooms may have been exposed. Most adults are immune from prior childhood illness or the two dose chicken pox (varicella) vaccine and therefore at minimal risk of coming down with chicken pox. For those who have not had the illness or been immunized with the two dose varicella vaccine, they are at risk of becoming ill with chicken pox.
- Students who become ill with chicken pox would develop symptoms 2-3 weeks after exposure. This would mean people exposed by the latest case could develop symptoms as late as December 8, 2011.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Students, faculty and staff should be on high alert for the first signs of chickenpox (i.e. fever and not feeling well). Any student experiencing the first signs of chickenpox should NOT attend school to prevent further spread of the illness during the infectious period.
- All persons with chicken pox must stay home from school and other group activities until they are no longer infectious, i.e. the lesions are crusted over, usually about 5 days from the rash onset.
- It is *strongly recommended* that all students who have not been vaccinated against chicken pox receive a dose of the Varicella (chickenpox) vaccine. Call 459-2500 to make an appointment for the chicken pox vaccine (free immunization to students with SHIP insurance) The student health center is closed Thursday and Friday 11/24 and 11/25 for Thanksgiving holiday but will reopen Monday 11/28/11.
- It is *strongly recommended* that all students who have received only one dose of the vaccine receive a *second dose*, which will offer them further protection.
- *Immunocompromised individuals* who have been exposed to chickenpox should contact their health care provider for an evaluation. It is possible that they may need to be excluded from school to avoid serious illness.
- *Pregnant women* who have not had the illness or the vaccine should contact their health care provider.

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INFORMATION

- Chickenpox is spread through direct contact with secretions from the nose, mouth or rash, or by airborne spread of these fluids from someone with chickenpox. On average, it takes 14-16 days to develop chickenpox symptoms after being exposed, although it can take up to 21 days.

- The symptoms of chickenpox start with a mild fever and a general sense of “not feeling well” followed by an itchy rash that sometimes forms blisters. The contagious period is 1-2 days *before* the rash starts until all the sores are dry and crusted, usually 5 days after the rash begins.
- If you have received only one dose of the Varicella (chickenpox) vaccine, you may still become infected with “breakthrough” chickenpox. However, this illness is usually much milder although *it is still considered contagious*.
- People whose immune systems are compromised (leukemia, cancer therapy, HIV infection etc.) are at risk for serious complications if they are infected with chickenpox.
- If a pregnant woman develops chickenpox, this could seriously affect her health or the health of her baby.

#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- If you are unable to obtain a Varicella immunization from your usual health care provider, immunizations are available at the Santa Cruz County Immunization Clinics from 1pm-4:30pm at 1080 Emeline Ave., Santa Cruz or 9 Crestview Drive, Watsonville. The fee for children under 19 years of age is \$15. Private insurance is not accepted at the county clinics.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) - - [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- California Department of Public Health:  
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/Varicella.aspx>

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

UCSC Student Health Center 831-459-2591 Medical Advice Line